



STAFF HIGHLIGHTS

Internal Communique ■ State Schools for Severely Handicapped

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Talking to Parents and LEAs

by Robin Williams, Central Office

It is critical that staff at State Schools for Severely Handicapped (SSSH) know and understand the eligibility, referral and enrollment process for placement in our schools and be able to apply that knowledge during real situations.

Local school districts and district IEP teams must determine whether to submit students for SSSH eligibility determination if their needs cannot be met in the local districts. However, often building administrators have conversations with local district representatives about a potential student

or meet with parents of prospective students during on-site visits prior to the decision to submit a student for consideration. These interactions can lead to confusion about eligibility, referral and placement. The parents and local district representatives may misconstrue conversations as acceptance into the program. They may misunderstand the eligibility process and not realize it is the only way students requiring separate school placement at State Schools can be served.

Below are some examples of situations that may occur.

Question or statement ...	Sample response from SSSH staff ...
<p><i>LEA representative states:</i></p> <p>"I guess you will be seeing more of me in the future. We have a student in our Early Childhood Special Education program that we will be sending to you. I am sure he will be eligible. After all, his IQ is below 30 and he uses a wheelchair and has a trach."</p>	<p>"I know that a variety of information is reviewed for each student referred to SSSH by our central office staff, and acceptance is not just based on IQ. We will have to wait and see if the student is eligible for State Schools."</p>
<p><i>Prospective student's parent states:</i></p> <p>"Robert needs training in life skills. The local district does not have the facilities to conduct this training. Can you provide that here?"</p>	<p>"If your son is found eligible for SSSH, and the local school district IEP team determines that SSSH is the least-restrictive educational environment, then the State School classroom teacher would develop an IEP based on the essential skills your child needs."</p>
<p><i>Prospective student's parent states:</i></p> <p>"Why is it taking so long to get my child into SSSH?"</p>	<p>"Have you spoken with the local district representative to see where they are in submitting the documentation necessary for consideration? If you want, I can call the central office and find out where the eligibility determination is in our process."</p>
<p><i>Prospective student's parent states:</i></p> <p>"Since the eligibility is taking so long, are there any forms that I can begin completing so that my son can begin school as soon as we get the go-ahead from the central office?"</p>	<p>"Without the eligibility acceptance and referral from the local district, we cannot complete the enrollment forms. Completion of the forms indicates that we will be providing service for your child. So let's wait until we know your child has been accepted by SSSH and the LEA has decided to refer your child to SSSH. If all this happens, then I will be glad to assist you in completing the forms to expedite the process."</p>

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Determining if Students Will Complete the IEP Goals Within the Implementation Period

by Merv Blunt, Central Office

As a teacher, you have several sources of information available to help decide if a student is going to accomplish an IEP goal during the IEP implementation time. The first source of information is to check if you are collecting the right type of performance data on the goal or objective. Chart 1 illustrates how to decide what type of data to collect

based upon the type of information needed.

After examining the data and deciding that you are collecting the appropriate data, you need to use the data to evaluate how fast the student is learning. If the student is not making progress, you need to determine why the student is not making progress. You can gain

valuable information by graphing the raw data. Chart 2 illustrates how graphing all the data points reveals a learning picture. From the learning picture, you can see how the student is progressing or if there is a lack of progress and how to address the concern.

A further source of information would be the quarterly analysis of data

Chart 1

TYPES OF DATA ...	HOW TO USE ...	EXAMPLES ...
Frequency: Measures how often a response occurs	Determine the number of correct responses or the percentage of correct responses in relation to opportunities. Teacher must decide how many responses are needed to provide adequate data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percent of correct responses • Number of correct responses • How many steps in task analysis are correct
Duration: Measures the total time a response occurred out of a specific amount of time	Time the response from beginning to end.	<i>How long the student:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is engaged in activity • Performs a skill • Has a behavior outburst • Maintains proper positioning
Time Sample: Records the presence or absence of a response in short intervals	Set a standard amount of time and only count responses occurring during that time period.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attending to activity • Staying in seat • Attending to a vocational skill • Being on task
Plot Recording: Determines frequency, time of day and duration of response	Graph how long and when something occurred.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behavior analysis • Toileting • Seizures
Latency Recording: Determines how quickly the student responds	Measure how long a student takes to initiate a response. Not concerned if response is right or wrong.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow directions • Offers independent response • Initiates and responds to communication • Initiates task

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Talking to Parents and LEAs

(continued from page 1)

Advice

Local staff must not assume that a child will be found eligible for SSSH based on the strong feelings of the district representative or parent or on

similarities between the child and past or current students attending that school. It would be unfair and cause unfortunate hard feelings if an SSSH principal indicates that a child appears to be someone who would be appropriately served only for the LEA to receive a non-eligibility notice later from central office. Eligibility is carefully reviewed prior to making

a determination and takes into consideration more information than is available to the local SSSH staff.

In addition, even though a student is found eligible for SSSH services, this does not guarantee that the district will refer the student to SSSH. For instance, the district may still decide to serve the student and access the Severe Disabilities Fund. ♦

Completing IEP Goals

(continued from page 2)

for completing the Report of Student Progress (RSP). Check to see if the student is making adequate progress to complete the IEP goal. Most IEPs tend to run for a year, so in theory, each quarter the student should be making approximately 25 percent of goal attainment. Remember that State Schools goals are now written without prompts, so if the student is at 25 percent but prompting is needed, the teacher will have to decide based on the student's history, abilities and rate of learning if the student will make adequate progress over the next three quarters to accomplish the IEP goal. The last two quarters of the IEP period are the critical quarters to examine the data and alter strategies if it appears the student will not accomplish the goal.

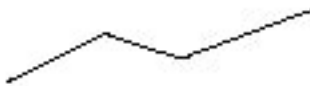
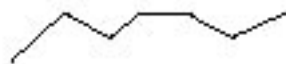
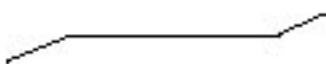


By using all of these sources of information, it is possible to make effective changes in modifications and adjustments to the teaching strategies, the skill level and the reinforcement. The intent is for the student to be able to accomplish during the implementation period all the IEP goals developed by the IEP team.

Interpreting Your Learning Pictures

1. Steady progress, with bumps:
 - a. No need for instructional changes.
 - b. Keep doing whatever you are doing — it works.
 - c. Continue to check the student's progress to see if it is sufficient to accomplish the IEP goal within the implementation period.
2. Bouncing up and down:
 - a. Learning is occurring but reinforcement is not consistent enough to motivate the student.
 - b. The student demonstrates the ability learn but needs either more reinforcement or more consistent reinforcement.

- c. Verify that the reinforcer is motivating to the student and not just what you think would be reinforcing.
- d. Use only powerful reinforcers if the learning picture shows bouncing.
- e. Determine if the student is satiated with the reinforcer.
- f. Controlling reinforcers:
 - Just because a student is improving at a goal does not mean reinforcement should stop.
 - Reinforcement needs to be slowly faded and paired with verbal praise.
 - If you stop the reinforcement too soon, the student will not be successful.
 - The student may realize that if he doesn't do the skill during the activity, the teacher will bring out the reinforcer.
3. Progress with long plateaus:
 - a. Are the teaching steps too broad for the student to accomplish — acquisition, fluency, generalization?
 - b. Change teaching more frequently — strategies, progression, materials and opportunities for learning.
- c. If student is stuck on one step, then consider:
 - Doing a task analysis to see if you have forgotten a step.
 - If using a task analysis — use the branching technique and teach it individually. When success occurs, return it to task analysis.
4. Flat:
 - a. Stop teaching until you have re-evaluated your teaching strategies, materials and teaching progression, reinforcement and level of difficulty.
 - b. Examine the student's consistency in responses.
 - c. Examine your consistency of responses to the student.
5. Regressive:
 - a. Reassess the reason(s) for the regression. Is it motivation or confusion in teaching or learning skill?
 - b. Rethink what you wanted to accomplish with this skill. Is there another way to teach this skill? ♦

Chart 2

LEARNING PICTURES		
1	Steady progress, with bumps	
2	Bouncing up and down	
3	Progress, then long plateaus	
4	Flat	
5	Regressive	

What if the Student Is Not Progressing Within the Implementation Period?

After checking data charts, you realize your student is not progressing at a rate that will let her accomplish the IEP goal within the implementation period. What do you do? This question was posed to a group of teachers at State Schools, and their insights and suggestions are compiled in this article. As you can see, many factors can contribute to this situation, and educators need to take a holistic approach to facilitating goal acquisition.

Data Collection

- Data should be collected at least weekly to check progress.
- Try collecting data several days for a week to see if that provides a clue to the reason for poor performance.
- Make sure the charting is being done correctly. Ensure the staff understands the testing process. Check for discrepancies between the results with various testers.
- Ensure the data collected matches the data in the IEP goal.
- When the data is transferred into a graphic format, see if it shows more clearly what is happening with the student. Does the student do better at certain times of the day?
- Determine what the data tells you. Flat data suggests a skills acquisition problem. Variable data (up and down) suggests a motivation problem.

Review Teaching Strategy

- Review the task analysis of the goal to see where the student is having a problem. Can the student achieve most of the goal but gets stuck on one or two steps? Examine the branching concept of task analysis.

- Determine what instructional adaptations are needed to help the student understand how to respond correctly.
- Determine if the task is too complex. Can the steps be broken down into smaller components of the essential skill? Focus teaching on the areas

What do you do?

- Data collection
 - Review teaching strategy
 - Prompts and cues
 - Materials and adaptations
 - Reinforcers
 - General ideas
- Experiment with a new approach
 - Medical factors
 - Behavioral factors
- Testing after implementing changes
 - Reconvene the IEP team

- giving the student difficulty.
- Find out if all staff members understand the instructional process and if they are all teaching the skill in the same way.
- Determine if the student is learning more easily with some staff members than others. For generalization of skills, the student should be able to achieve the goal with any staff member; however, during the learning phase, the student may achieve more consistent progress with one preferred staff person.

Prompts and Cues

- Provide prompts that are concrete enough to promote correct responses, and fade them out as quickly as possible.

- Find out if the staff is using language that is too wordy or difficult for the student to understand. Try slight changes in wording or tone of voice.

Materials and Adaptations

- Adapt materials in terms of size, position, color and shape, and make them age-appropriate.
- Some adaptations may become a permanent adaptation for the student.
- Use different materials.
- Position the student correctly for easy access to materials.
- Adapt the adaptations. You may need to be creative to meet the needs of the student. One teacher provided the most appropriate switch for a visually impaired student and positioned it so he had the best chance of hitting it with his natural arm movement. It was necessary to add Play-Doh, netting and foam to the switch to increase his awareness of it and improve his grasping reflexes.
- Try different approaches to learning the skill. A student who was highly resistant to toothbrushing and other oral motor stimulation was highly receptive to using an inexpensive, battery-run toothbrush (idea provided by parent).

Reinforcers

- Determine if reinforcers need to be increased, decreased, changed or discontinued. Have a list of a minimum of 8 to 10 reinforcers for each student.
- Discover if the activity is reinforcing for this student. Each student has her own preferences and may not enjoy what other students or the classroom staff enjoy.

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Student Is Not Progressing

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- Make the reinforcement readily available so the student understands the reinforcer is being given for a correct response.

General Ideas

- Change the location of the instruction. If the room is noisy or distracting, the student may not be able to perform the task.
- Use group instruction — many students prefer this method of learning.
- Allow the student to “help” other students or adults and learn in the process.
- Change the frequency of instruction. Increase the opportunities to practice the needed skill.
- Change the time of day for that instruction — select the student’s most receptive time.
- Increase the fun factor. Embed the skill acquisition into activities that stimulate the student.

Experiment With a New Approach

- Ask for help from other classroom staff in the school — share teaching skills.
- Ask for assistance with instruction from the building administrator or supervisor for instruction.
- Approach the physical, occupational or speech therapists for ideas.
- Find out from the parents what works at home.
- Read research relevant to that student’s needs and situation.

Medical Factors

Determine if any of the following factors are relevant to this student. Think about how you can help get the student back on track.

- Medical condition that is delaying skill acquisition.
- Recent prolonged absence from school.

Behavioral Factors

- Determine if the student is experiencing emotional/social changes (e.g., family situations, change of residence) and needs more behavioral support with demands decreasing and reinforcements increasing.
- Take into account if the student has behavioral or sensorimotor needs.

Testing After Implementing Changes

- Introduce one change, and track the resulting data. Note the date and nature of the change on the progress chart using a change line. Track progress more frequently than once a week.
- If this does not produce sufficient change in progress, introduce another change and track. Be willing to revise ideas several times until you find the solution that works for that student.

Reconvene the IEP Team

- When all changes implemented have not resulted in significant progress, the team may have to revise the goal. It is possible the goal was not realistic when set.
- Make sure the skill is appropriate for this student. The goal should be a precise skill that is observable and measurable.
- Ensure the goal was written to demonstrate a skill rather than a specific activity or use of specific materials. ♦

This article was made possible by contributions from: Debbie Bergmann, Trails West; Janet Arnold, Current River; Pam Sweeten, Greene Valley; Jean Major, Boonslick; and all the teachers at Parkview and New Dawn. Thanks to all of you for these ideas.

A SNOWY DAY!

by Susan Bonner, Supervisor for Instruction, and Kathy Adair, Teacher, Gateway-Hubert Wheeler State School

In January, Kathy Adair used *The Snowy Day* by Ezra Jack Keats to teach a unit about weather. The book was about a boy, Peter, who awoke one morning to a world filled with snow. He made tracks in the snow and put a snowball in his pocket. (Needless to say, it melted.)

We made one classroom wall into a huge white snow scene overlaid with pastel tissue paper snowflakes. This created the appearance of a field of snow just like in the book. The students designed snowflakes by choosing colors and sizes and tracing a stencil to mark the lines to cut. Some students were able to cut the shapes themselves; others were assisted.

The class discussed snowflakes and their colors, sizes and shapes. Students answered questions about the story. Some students practiced matching and using receptive language. They matched the snowflakes and/or chose snowflakes requested. Students counted the snowflakes orally and by one-to-one correspondence. They marked special snowflakes so that they could recognize them later.

The book described many activities that Peter experienced on his snowy day. As the class read the story, our classroom became the snowy field, and the students imitated Peter’s actions in the snow.

- We made tracks in the snow with sand. The students touched it and used their fingers to make their own tracks.
- We made snowballs from ice cream and the students rolled them in coconut. They enjoyed experiencing the textures with their fingers and tasting the difference between the ice cream and coconut. We refroze the snowballs to eat after lunch.
- We stacked snowballs to create our snowman. We used picture schedules to help some students create the snowman.

Who needed a snowy day when we had a snowy classroom? ♦

HUMAN RESOURCES

Fair and Accurate Credit Transaction Act (FACTA)

by Cheri Landers, Central Office

This new law, FACTA, gives every American the right to a free credit report every year from each of the three major credit bureaus. For Missouri residents, effective March 1, 2005, you can request a free report. Equifax, Experian and TransUnion have joined forces to offer a one-stop free credit report center.

The Web site will allow you to request, view and print one, two or all three of your free credit reports quickly via a secure Web site. You can also request the report by phone or mail (these will be processed within 15 days of receipt).

- Web site address:
www.annualcreditreport.com
- Toll-free number: 1-877-322-8228
- Mailing address: Annual Credit Report Request Service, P.O. Box 105281, Atlanta, GA 30348-5281

The three credit bureaus stressed that this is the only service they have authorized for requesting your free annual report. ♦

Maximum Annual Leave

by Cheri Landers, Central Office

Personnel Policy 200-210 states that employees cannot have an annual leave balance of more than two years worth of accrual on October 31 of each year. Excess annual leave is allowed to accumulate and carry over from pay period to pay period until October 31.

Employees need to look at their annual leave balances and project what will be accrued and taken

between now and October. If after that projection you will be over your maximum annual leave allowed, it is time to start planning to take some time off. Please discuss with your supervisor before requesting annual leave. It is the responsibility of the employee to monitor the annual leave balances.

When a staff member ends state employment, either by retirement or resignation, only the amount of annual leave accrued up to the maximum allowed will be paid. Any annual leave accrued over the maximum at the time of separation will be lost or can be donated to the Shared Leave pool. ♦

Family and Medical Leave

by Cheri Landers, Central Office

Family and Medical Leave (FML) provides up to 12 weeks of job-protected unpaid leave within a 12-month period to salaried employees who have worked for the state of Missouri at least 12 months and have at least 1,250 hours of actual work time in the 12 months immediately preceding the leave.

FML may be used under the following conditions:

- birth of a child;
- placement (adoption or foster care) of a child with the employee;
- caring for a spouse, son, daughter, or parent of the employee when the spouse, son, daughter or parent has a serious health condition;
- for the serious health condition of the employee.

For a detailed definition of a serious health condition, refer to personnel policy 200-235.

Employees are required to notify their supervisor of a situation that might qualify under FML. After it is determined that the employee

qualifies, a letter and FML request will be sent to the employee for completion. Any leave taken for that qualifying event will be coded as FML.

Any available sick, annual and compensatory leave will be used concurrently with an employee's 12-week FML entitlement. FML is unpaid leave if no leave is available.

While on an approved leave of absence and FML, the Department shall continue to provide the Department's share of health insurance coverage to salaried employees currently participating in state-sponsored health plans. If salaried employees pay any part of the premium, those payments must continue to be paid personally by the employee.

The Department will not continue to provide state-sponsored life insurance at no cost to employees during FML. Employees have the option of continuing this coverage at their own expense. ♦

Convenience of Direct Deposit

by Cheri Landers, Central Office

All new employees are required to use direct deposit. Anyone currently receiving paper checks needs to consider direct deposit. Pay will be available in your bank account on the date pay is distributed, and delays caused by mailing of paper checks will be avoided. It takes seven to 14 workdays to receive a replacement check for a lost or destroyed check. In some instances, you will receive your next bi-monthly check before you receive your replacement check.

Substitute employees can be on direct deposit. Direct deposit forms are available from your building administrator. ♦

Using Newspapers & Literacy Bags

by Mary Schilling, Principal, Mapaville State School

Newspapers

This year we began exploring the use of newspapers to meet IEP goals. We contacted the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* and began receiving the newspaper every Wednesday through their Newspapers in Education program. We selected the Wednesday paper because it has a variety of ads students can use to create pictorial shopping lists or practice folders when they are "shopping" in the classroom before going to an off-campus site to shop. We found the newspaper is appropriate for all reading levels. Each grade level has been using the newspaper in different ways to emphasize student IEP goals.

- ✓ REACH teacher Debbie Sanderson is using the newspaper to teach name recognition and spelling and for matching numbers to objects (1-5). She teaches these lessons using a file folder format. See *Sample 1* below.
- ✓ Primary teacher Barb Poposky is using the newspaper to teach name recognition. Students are given a set of letters in their first name. Students have placed the letters on art projects to identify personal artwork. Ms. Poposky uses letters from headlines for each student to match the letters of their name to a sample. See *Sample 2* below.
- ✓ Intermediate teacher Alecia Glore has students identify grocery items in the newspaper.
- ✓ Young adult teachers Brenda Habsieger and Karen Shepherd use the newspaper to practice answering questions. The class reviews the weather each day. The teacher or aide reads a sports or human-interest story from the paper during group language instruction. Students look at pictures and discuss the story. Ms. Habsieger's class also uses recipes from the "Everyday" section to create new foods in home living class. The recipe is broken down into pictorial and written steps for the students to follow. Students also get pictures of needed ingredients from the store ads and shop for items at Wal-Mart.

Literacy Bags

In addition to using the newspaper, the primary teachers are also initiating the use of literacy bags to strengthen skills practice and parent/family participation in attaining the student's IEP goals. The literacy bags include a variety of fun projects that can be done at home with family members to enhance learning the IEP skill. The bags contain cards with directions for each activity. The "Name" literacy bag contains the following activities:

- Spell your name with yarn. (Include tag board with name written in black marker, yarn, child's scissors and glue.)
- Match magnetic letters of the alphabet. (Include a metal cookie sheet and a set of magnetic upper- and lowercase letters.)
- Make a name necklace. (Include yarn, uncooked penne noodles and sticky letters in a zippered plastic baggie.)
- Three to five books to read together.

Additional resources for K-1 grade levels are available at Creative Teaching Press, P.O. Box 2723, Huntington Beach, CA 92647-0723. Telephone: 1-800-287-8879. Web site: www.creativeteaching.com.

Suggested Reading Materials

- *Literacy Bags: Make-and-Take Mini-Units from A to Z*
By Kathy Howell and Alisa Webb
- *Getting Ready to Read: Independent Phonemic Awareness Centers for Emergent Readers*
By Jo Fitzpatrick
- *Book Cooks: 26 Recipes from A-Z Inspired by Favorite Children's Books*
By Cheryl Apgar ♦

Sample 1

	INSIDE FOLDER — LEFT	INSIDE FOLDER — RIGHT
1	INSTRUCTIONS: Cut the numbers 1 through 5 out of the newspaper. The size of the number should be big enough for each student to read. Use colors. Space numbers down the left side so you can place pictures across the page to match each number. Look through ads and newspapers to find pictures and place them in a line across the file folder. Pictures can be laminated and attached with Velcro to be used again or to share with other students for a different set of pictures each day the lesson is taught. Students can look for pictures in a theme (e.g., transportation, foods we eat for Thanksgiving, toys that girls like).	
2		
3		
4		
5		

Sample 2

Name — J a c o b 	Try letters of various sizes but use the same size of each letter during a single teaching session. Place the letters on index cards with Velcro attached so that students can match the name to a sample.
Use index cards with a letter on each card to spell out the student's name.	Place cards in a pocket or zippered plastic bag to store.

HEALTH

Protecting Our Students From Abuse and Neglect

by Claudia Rampley, Central Office

Child abuse is both shocking and commonplace. As educators, we know that children are often helpless unless a responsible adult intervenes on their behalf.

Developmentally disabled children are more vulnerable to abuse and may need greater protection. Often they are less able to defend themselves physically and are dependent on others for eating, dressing, toileting and mobility. In many cases, they are unable to differentiate between appropriate and inappropriate physical contact. Difficulties with communication can make it hard for the child to tell about abuse.

While the great majority of caregivers have the child's best interest at heart, some will use the child's vulnerability as an opportunity to abuse. In almost all cases, the perpetrator of abuse of a developmentally disabled child is known to the victim, which is also true of perpetrators in the general population.

Child abuse consists of any act or failure to act that endangers a child's physical or emotional health and development. The four major types of child abuse are:

- Physical abuse — non-accidental physical injury to a child
- Sexual abuse — sexual act between an adult and child
- Emotional abuse — attitude, behavior or failure to act by the caregiver that interferes with a child's mental health or social development
- Neglect — failure to provide for the child's basic needs.

If you suspect child abuse, look for clusters of the following physical and behavioral signs.

■ Physical abuse

- unexplained burns, cuts, bruises or welts in the shape of an object
- bite marks
- antisocial behavior

■ Sexual abuse

- inappropriate interest in or knowledge of sexual acts
- seductiveness
- nightmares and bedwetting
- fear of a particular person or family member
- self-injury
- over-compliance or excessive aggression
- eating disorders
- signs of general distress or agitation
- withdrawal

■ Emotional abuse

- depression
- hostility
- lack of concentration
- eating disorders

■ Neglect

- unsuitable clothing for the weather
- being dirty and unwashed
- extreme hunger
- apparent lack of supervision
- repeated injuries or injuries/illnesses that do not receive necessary medical care

The Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline unit accepts confidential reports of suspected child abuse or neglect 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Call the Hotline at 1-800-392-3738. Any person may report suspected abuse or neglect, and anonymous reports are accepted from individuals who are not mandated by occupation to report. Effective Aug. 28, 2004, Missouri law requires mandated reporters to identify themselves when making a report.

As an educator, you have a legal responsibility to report suspected cases of child abuse. You could save a life by being aware of the signs of child abuse and reacting quickly and responsibly. ♦

INNOVATIONS

Holding a Resource Fair

by Connie Billings, Principal, and Danny Holland, Home School Coordinator, Mississippi Valley and Lillian Schaper State Schools

Mississippi Valley State School held its second resource fair on Friday, Nov. 12, 2004. This was a non-attendance day for students, and the fair was open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. to give working parents a chance to attend.

The fair served two purposes:

- to inform the public about the State Schools and the services that are provided.
- to provide parents with a chance to visit and get information from agencies that provide services to developmentally disabled individuals in the local area and around the state.

The home school coordinator spent approximately one month locating resources, requesting food donations from local stores and compiling invitations to parents and agencies. The first year the fair was held, the local newspaper ran an article on the fair and the school. Both years, the paper publicized the fair in a short, separate article. In future years, the school plans to use a local television station to provide additional publicity.

The following organizations attended the fair this year: Family Services, Division of Senior Services; Hannibal Regional Center; Learning Opportunities; Mark Twain Area Counseling Center; Marion Co. Board of Services for the Developmentally Disabled; Monroe City Sheltered Workshop; Northeast Independent Living Services; Special Olympics; Vocational Rehabilitation; Camp Wonderland; Regal Home Care; Monroe Co. Health Department; Foster Grandparents;

INNOVATIONS (cont.)

IMPACT; FACT; The Child Center; and the local school districts of Van-Far, Hannibal, Monroe City and Wright City.

Information provided to the parents covered mental health, summer camps, employment following graduation, adult living, general human services, respite and advocacy. The local school districts provided assistance to parents with questions but also were able to gain insight into how a State School operates.

In 2003, 49 organizations were invited to attend; 23 participated. Sixteen people from the community attended along with 10 parents from our schools. In 2004, 54 organizations were invited, and 17 participated. Five of the 17 were new to the fair. Nine people from the community attended along with six parents from our schools. Future plans are to host the resource fair every other year.

Positive outcomes from the fair included:

- Regal Health Care agreed to set up a meeting with our parents of teenagers in need of after-school care.
- Many parents learned more about Monroe City Sheltered Workshop and job opportunities. They felt more comfortable about their children seeking employment at a workshop and contacted the home school coordinator for assistance.
- The school received positive feedback from the fair. The event let many community members know what we do. We noticed an increase in calls from parents outside of our school requesting more information on our school.

If you would like additional information on setting up a resource fair, contact Danny Holland at Mississippi Valley State School at 573-221-1857. ♦

Walking Books Make Their Way to Greene Valley

by Carisa Long, Home School Coordinator, and Marilyn Ables, Teacher, Greene Valley State School

Students at Greene Valley State School now have the public library at their fingertips. The Springfield-Greene County Library has a program through Outreach Services called Walking Books where the books come to you.

Walking Books allows schools/organizations to place a request for materials from the library. The library then delivers and picks up at the facility once a month. With this service, teachers can:

- Order books, CDs, videos, DVDs, computer games, etc.
- Request specific types of books, authors or titles.
- Let the library staff select materials on a given subject and at a particular grade level.
- Order Discovery Bags, which are packed with books, videos and CDs that allow classrooms to study science, math and health. The variety of media in the bags helps teachers adapt lessons to students' learning styles. Parents can also check out these bags to continue the learning at home.

Walking Books is wonderful for accessing extra materials for classroom units.

If you would like more information about this program, contact Nancy Danielson at 417-874-8117 or visit their Web site at thelibrary.springfield.missouri.org.

Other Missouri libraries offer similar programs for the disabled or homebound. Teachers may be able to encourage their local library to offer some of these services for their school. ♦

Clean Hands!

by Candace Mallory, Principal, Ozark Horizon and Skyview State Schools

What could be more fun than teaching hand-washing using glitter and lotion? Here is one idea you might want to try in your classroom.

Use group instruction to teach the important self-care skill of hand-washing. Have a discussion about why and when it is important to wash hands. The lesson could include talking about germs and how these spread from one person to another and cause sickness.

Thorough hand-washing is one of the key methods for preventing the spread of colds and flu. (A teacher who is interested could extend this topic by using resources to show pictures of germs, having the students draw their own ideas of what a germ looks like, and even using a microscope to show that items invisible to our eyes do exist.)

To begin the group instruction, the teacher and aides demonstrate washing their hands and carefully discuss each step. Then they can try an experiment to see how well the students get their hands clean when they wash.

Each student places a small amount of hand lotion in the palm of his hand. The teacher or aide then sprinkles a small amount of glitter on top of the lotion. The students rub their hands to spread the glitter. The students go to the sink and follow the proper hand-washing steps to remove the glitter and lotion. After a student is finished, he looks at his hands to see if all the glitter is gone. Discuss how many germs would be left on the student's hands if the glitter were germs.

This activity has been an eye-opening experience for our students who had to keep washing to get the glitter off. ♦

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Praxis Tests

by Stephanie Brooks, Central Office

Educators holding a valid professional Missouri teaching certificate in a subject area other than special education can obtain a special education teaching certificate by passing the following Praxis tests:

■ **Certification in:**

Early Childhood Special Education

Praxis test required:

Test 10690 — Special Education: Preschool/Early Childhood

■ **Certification in:**

Mild Moderate Cross Categorical

Praxis tests required:

Test 20353 — Education of Exceptional Students: Core Content Knowledge; **and**

Test 10542 — Education of Exceptional Students: Mild Moderate Disabilities

Information on the Praxis tests can be obtained from ETS at 609-771-7395 or by looking at their Web site at www.ets.org/praxis. The final test date for the 2004-2005 school year is June 11, 2005, with a registration date of May 10, 2005. The Web site posts the test dates by school year, and generally six tests are offered each year beginning in September. Results take about four weeks to obtain and are automatically sent to DESE's Educator Certification Section. Any teacher obtaining a passing grade should write to the Educator Certification Section, DESE, P.O. Box 480, Jefferson City, MO 65102, to request that the new certificate be issued. Enclose a copy of the Praxis results with a note of your name, address and Social Security number.

Note:

• *Educators currently holding temporary authorization certificates are required to take Praxis tests as*

part of the Temporary Authorization Certificate (TAC) program. Passing the tests will not lead to full certification until all the required coursework is completed.

• *Passing the Praxis test 30544: Education of Exceptional Students: Severe to Profound Disabilities will not result in certification in SDD unless it is taken as part of a full SDD certification program.*

Temporary Authorization Certificate (TAC)

Anyone with a bachelor's degree (GPA over 2.5) may obtain a Missouri TAC in any subject area where there is a demand for educators. This includes special education. Applicants must pass background checks and make a joint application with the school district that intends to hire the applicant. (Educators who already possess a teaching certificate may apply for a TAC in an additional subject area.)

When temporary authorization certificates were originally introduced, teachers were required to obtain a program of study from a college. As this certificate has evolved, teachers now have two options for their program of study:

■ Obtain a program of study from a college and complete all courses on this program. This can be relatively lengthy for those with no education background. State School educators typically obtain an SDD program of study from Central Missouri State University

or Webster College or a MMCC program from other colleges that offer this coursework. The educator must complete at least nine credit hours from this program each year of the certificate.

■ Complete the plan of courses for the necessary program of study. Again, State School educators will be interested in the MMCC or the SDD plans, both of which are found at the end of the Application for Temporary Authorization Certificate form on the DESE Web site at www.dese.mo.gov/divteachqual/teachcert/forms.html. The educator is permitted to select the required courses from several colleges and again must take at least nine credit hours per year to maintain the temporary certificate.

With both options, the educator will need to pass the same Praxis tests to obtain the permanent teaching certificate.

Educators who originally began with the program of study from a college have the option of moving across to the self-directed plan of courses, which may reduce the number of courses to be taken. Before choosing this option, educators should be aware that the shorter plan results in a DESE-recognized teaching certificate, but there is no guarantee other states will recognize this certificate if the educator wants to teach in another state. This is because the shorter plan of courses does not constitute a full teaching program, and the educator will not have been recommended for a teaching certificate by a college.

Educators with questions about selecting between a college program of study or the shorter DESE plan of courses or about changing from the college program should contact Sandy Wadley in Educator Certification at 573-751-8337 for more information. ♦

Questions & Answers

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Have questions about any of the topics covered in this newsletter?

Need to know more about topics that pertain to your job? We will answer them in this section. Forward questions to Stephanie Brooks in Central Office.

What to Expect During an MSIP Review

During the 2004-2005 school year, a number of the State School principals and other staff had the opportunity to participate on Missouri School Improvement Program (MSIP) review teams at other school districts. We asked three principals to share their observations about the process.

★ Diane Larimer Trails West State School

"The Missouri School Improvement Program is designed to promote excellence in the public schools of the state." The state has responsibility for the quality of education. All schools must meet certain standards, and schools must continue to improve and to strive for excellence. In other words, it is designed to improve education and thus student learning and achievement!

Last school year, I had the privilege of serving on a team that conducted an on-site MSIP review. It was an interesting and informative experience. Until I was trained, I had no idea what I would be doing as part of the review team. I learned that an MSIP review verifies the district's performance on educational standards in the areas of resource, process and performance. I was assigned to a committee that was given a portion of the standards to review. Information collected before and during the review determines a district's performance. Methods of collecting information included member observation, district personnel interviews, surveys and review of district documentation.

Even though I did not participate in reviewing documents in all areas, all members were included in the discussion regarding conclusions. This gave me an overview of the larger picture and how each area reviewed by the MSIP team impacts other functions and responsibilities of the school

district. The cleanliness and safety of the facilities influences school environment; school environment affects teaching and learning; teaching impacts student achievement; student achievement affects success on assessments; staff development affects teaching; and support professional staff, media, health and guidance influence environment and student success. The on-site review helps determine what is working and what areas need improvement. If everything is on target, the school district can provide quality education.

I thoroughly enjoyed the experience. It made me more aware of Missouri's educational endeavors and the importance of unbiased input from outside sources. By participating in MSIP, the State Schools for Severely Handicapped will be elevated to the same level of expectations to which other school districts are held.

★ Mary Schilling Mapaville State School

School climate was one section that I reviewed. Because we have not participated in an MSIP review before, this will be a time for us to show just what a great job we do in our program. Reviewers are looking for characteristics such as:

- Friendly/courteous employees.
- Student work displayed around the school.
- Positive statements from staff about school, students, the administration and so on.

Each team member is assigned to interview a set number of persons on staff within the district. The reviewer is given a list of four or five persons to interview and a standard set of questions to ask each person. The interview questions are based on the position held by the person being interviewed.

In relation to the questions for teachers, there are several questions

on reading and writing. At State Schools we will have to focus on the alternate or adaptive ways that we are teaching reading to our students. Another major area of questioning involves professional development. Each person will be asked about the professional development activities that have occurred over the past two years and how those professional development activities impacted teaching. Professional development activities could include assistance from the Supervisor for Instruction, EID training and REACH training.

★ Don Brown B.W. Robinson and Ozark Hills State Schools

Although a few people from central and area offices will do the majority of the required documentation and work to prepare for the MSIP review, the staff at the 36 schools can also assist to make the review a positive experience.

Local school staff in State Schools may experience a visit from the MSIP team at their school, and some staff may have the opportunity to participate in the interview phase of the site visit. This is not a threatening or stressful experience as you will have access to the questions that will be asked several weeks prior to the interviews, and the visiting teams are Missouri educators, just like us, who want the best for all the students. All job classifications in State Schools will most likely be interviewed. Interviews with staff usually last no longer than 45 minutes. Listed on page 12 are some sample questions from the interviews conducted this year.

As we all want what is best for our students, and we work very hard to see that happens every day in our classrooms, we need to use the MSIP process as a way to make things better for our schools. Our new curriculum guide and graduate

(continued on page 12)

MSIP Review

(continued from page 11)

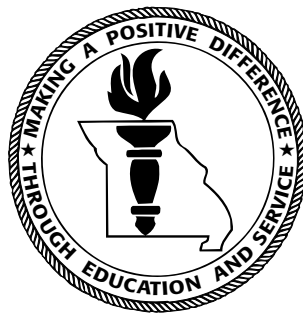
goals have been positive additions to our school program as a result of our work preparing for MSIP. A positive approach and a cooperative attitude working with the MSIP program by all State School staff will make our educational program better for our students. ♦

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In the September Staff Highlights, we shared that we will be working with school staff on mock interviews. This process will give you an opportunity to become comfortable with the interview procedure before the MSIP review in spring 2006. Many central and area office staff, as well as building administrators, have served on MSIP review teams. They would be an excellent resource if you should have any questions about MSIP.

A Selection of MSIP Interview Questions

Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What assessment information do you use to plan lessons or implement instruction? • How do you use your curriculum guides?
Teacher Aide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are your primary responsibilities? • Are there enough instructional materials in the classrooms where you work?
Nurse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are health services evaluated annually? What changes have resulted from the evaluation? • How is the K-12 comprehensive health curriculum implemented?
Secretary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the major tasks and/or activities of your job? • How much of your job is clerical and how much is public service work?
Maintenance Worker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you have the necessary equipment and supplies to do a good job? • Are you involved in inspecting the buildings for potential safety hazards?
Bus Drivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does your bus need any additional safety equipment or features? • How is the regular maintenance for your bus handled?
Nutrition Worker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the food service facilities adequate in size? • How does your program help to reinforce healthy eating habits and promote good nutrition?



STATE SCHOOLS FOR SEVERELY HANDICAPPED
Missouri Department of Elementary
and Secondary Education

• • •

Web site: dese.mo.gov/divspeced/stateschools/

NOTE: If you have items of interest for the *Staff Highlights*, please call 573-751-0706 (Missouri Relay 800-735-2966) or forward them to: Stephanie Brooks, State Schools for Severely Handicapped, P.O. Box 480, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0480. E-mail: Stephanie.Brooks@dese.mo.gov